

Prince George's County Public Schools Financial Incentive Rewards for Supervisors and Teachers



The Financial Incentive Rewards for Supervisors and Teachers (FIRST) program in Prince George's County Maryland, engaged 272 teachers, 37 principals and assistant principals, and 8,000 to 10,000 students in the pilot year, 2008-09. Twelve pilot schools were selected from a pool of underperforming schools that are in some stage of corrective action or restructuring (schools that have failed to meet academic targets for at least three years and that have more than 30 percent of students enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program). The FIRST program augments school supports that are already in place, including enhanced staffing allocations for content area coaches, mentors for teachers with fewer than two years of experience, additional leadership support, and other targeted student intervention programs.

Needs Assessment Results and General Information

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is the second largest school system in Maryland and serves more than 129,000 students. The students are primarily black (76.3 percent) and Hispanic (14 percent). The county's teacher population is generally stable, with 62 percent meeting the highly qualified criteria. The highly qualified teachers are not evenly distributed, however; less than one-third teach in schools with high percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. At the high school level, just 39.95 percent of teachers are highly qualified and teaching in schools with high percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Prince George's County struggles with maintaining a highly effective administrative staff—over 80 percent of principals have fewer than three years of experience in school administration.

Background

Prince George's County is working to implement its new county-wide business plan, Children Come First, to move out of corrective action and improve student achievement. Less than half of the students tested in PGCPS showed proficiency on the Maryland School Assessments, and less than half of high school students passed the mandatory high school graduation exams in English, biology, algebra, and government. The FIRST program targets (1) increasing teacher and administrator effectiveness, leading to higher student achievement; (2) reforming teacher and administrator compensation systems to reward them for increased student achievement; (3) increasing the number of effective teachers teaching poor, minority, and disadvantaged students in hard-to-staff schools; and (4) creating a sustainable performance-based compensation system.

Location(s)	Prince George's County, Maryland
Award Date	June 2007
Duration	5 years
Partners	None

Incentives

The FIRST program will compensate participants based on student achievement, hard-to-staff subject areas, performance-based evaluation results, and professional advancement and contribution. Bonuses will be awarded to participating teachers (\$10,000), principals (\$12,500), and assistant principals (\$11,000) for meeting student achievement growth targets for the school (all three groups) and for individual student groups and tested subjects (teachers only); for teaching hard-to-staff subjects (teachers only); for meeting expectations on a standards-based evaluation system (all groups); for professional growth and development (all groups); assuming leadership and additional responsibilities to promote student achievement (administrators); and for participating in the Effective Practices Incentive Fund (EPIF) (all groups).

Each component of the compensation system is weighted to emphasize the importance of increased student achievement. Fifty percent of teacher bonuses and 60 percent of administrator bonuses are based on student achievement.

Evaluation

Student achievement will be measured using the Maryland State Assessments for grades 3 through 8 and the High School Assessments for grades 9 through 12. Additional local benchmark assessments for grades 3 through 8 are administered three times a year in reading and math, and local high school benchmark assessments are administered twice yearly. School-wide achievement targets will be set using growth over time modeling, for which a pilot program was conducted in PGCPSS during the 2006-07 school year. A similar model will be used for assessing individual student growth in the tested areas at the individual teacher/classroom level.

Teachers in the FIRST program participate in performance-based evaluation that incorporates multiple observations, self-reflection, and external

evaluations. Staff is evaluated on planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities (based on the Danielson model Framework for Teaching). The administrator's portfolio evaluation process includes self-reflection and external evaluations.

The standards for evaluation are based on six principles that include instructional leadership, assessment and supervision, management and organizational skills, community/parent partnerships, multicultural awareness and appreciation, and effective communications (based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders, and the Maryland Task Force on Administratorship).

Resources

The PGCPSS Board of Education has authorized multi-year budget allocations for salary enhancements to provide financial support for the FIRST program. The county has also secured corporate and foundation funding to augment the grant. Funding for maintaining the program after the grant period will come primarily from PGCPSS' general operating fund.

Data Systems

PGGPS has established a complete online data warehouse that collects and links student-level data, including demographic information, achievement, attendance, disciplinary data, and transfers. The data warehouse has the capability to link student-level data to individual schools and teachers.

Year 2 Activities

After an initial planning year, project FIRST was implemented in 12 schools, with 272 teachers and 37 administrators participating in the program. Inaugural incentive payments, based on the four tenants of Project First—student achievement as measured through growth over time, teaching in hard-to-staff subjects, standards-based evaluation results, and professional advancement and development—will be made in the fall of 2009. A total of 246 teachers completed the program during the first year and are eligible for payouts.

Outlook for Year 3

As PGCPs enters the second year of project implementation, an additional 10 schools were added to bring the total number of participating schools to 20. Due to district boundary changes, two FIRST schools from year one were closed (1 elementary and 1 middle school). A total of 435 teachers are active participants for the second year of program implementation. Of this total, 184 are returning participants from Year 1 for a 74 percent return rate of the 246 teachers who completed the program in Year 1. Likewise a total of 64 administrators are participating in the FIRST program for Year 2, which includes 30 returning from Year 1.